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| 10/569,559 | 02/27/2006 | Joseph W. Stolle | 2003UR033 | 5349 |
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| Brent R. Knight | | | HEWITT, JAMES M | |
| ExxonMobil Upstream Research Company | | | | |
| P.O. Box 2189 | | | ART UNIT | PAPER NUMBER |
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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

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|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Office Action Summary | Application No. 10/569,559 | Applicant(s) STOLLE ET AL. |
| | Examiner JAMES M. HEWITT | Art Unit 3679 |

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 09 March 2011.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1,2,4-14 and 16-28 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) 17-25 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) 8 and 26 is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 1,2,4-7,9-14, 16 and 28 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) 27 is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____

5) Notice of Informal Patent Application
 6) Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 2/2/11 has been entered.

Election/Restrictions

Claims 17-25 are withdrawn from consideration as being directed to a non-elected invention. See 37 CFR 1.142(b) and MPEP § 821.03.

Claim Objections

Claims 4-5 and 27 are objected to because of the following informalities:

In claim 4, line 3, should "a pre-defined axial alignment" be "said pre-defined axial alignment"?

In claim 27, line 3, should "a pre-defined axial alignment" be "said pre-defined axial alignment"?

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1-2, 5-7, 9-14, 16 and 28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In claim 1, lines 2-3, "said first component" lacks proper antecedent basis.

In claim 1, line 5, "said second component" lacks proper antecedent basis.

In claim 6, lines 2-3, "said first component" lacks proper antecedent basis.

In claim 6, line 4, "said second component" lacks proper antecedent basis.

In claim 7, line 4, "said first component" lacks proper antecedent basis.

In claim 7, line 6, "said second component" lacks proper antecedent basis.

In claim 28, line 1, it is unclear as to how "an item" relates to the spacer recited in claim 8; are they one and the same, different?

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-2, 4-7, 9-12 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hughes (US 5,950,744) in view of Carstensen (US 4,706,997).

Hughes discloses a pipe joint for self aligning a drill string, tubing string or casing string of the type comprising a plurality of drill pipe, tubing or casing sections arranged in end to end relation from a location above the ground to a lower location adjacent a tool connected to a bottom end of the string and wherein the adjacent ends of the sections are connected to each other to form a plurality of spaced joints extending downwardly from the ground to the tool, the improvement wherein each joint comprises an upper section having at least one downwardly projecting extension and a lower section having a corresponding recess for receiving the extension and wherein the extension and the recess can fit together in only one way.

Hughes employs pins, legs and keys (spacers/nipples) that mate corresponding recesses and slots (openings/nipple recipients) in order to align and join the sections in one way. The connection collar (18) includes internal straight threads, as shown in the figures.

As in the embodiment illustrated in Figs. 18-20, none of the first set of threads (94) overlap with any of the second set of threads (96).

As to claims 1, 6, 7 and 9, Hughes fails to teach a first seal configured to be disposed between the first component and the connection collar; and a second seal configured to be disposed between the second component and the connection collar, wherein the first seal and second seal isolate the first set of threads and the second set of threads from a region external to connection collar. Carstensen teaches a similar coupling for tubing comprising an internally threaded collar that receives male threaded tubing at each end. Carstensen provides internal grooves having seals therein at the

ends of the collar that act to seal the joints against leakage and also against external pressure. Accordingly, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to modify Hughes to provide a first seal disposed in a groove in the connection collar and between the first component and the connection collar; and a second seal disposed in a groove in the connection collar and between the second component and the connection collar as taught by Carstensen in order to isolate the first set of threads and the second set of threads from a region external to connection collar and to seal the joints against leakage and also against external pressure.

As to claim 11, Hughes fails to teach that both of the components are notched. Yet it would have been an obvious matter of design choice to notch both of Hughes' components since Applicant has attributed no absolute criticality to notching both components and states "Additionally first component 10 and second component 20 can be fabricated such that there is essentially no external diameter upset (i.e., there is substantially constant external diameter across the connection)."

As to claim 12, Hughes fails to teach that the components are covered with a suitable coating to protect from galling or corrosion. Examiner takes official notice of the provision of coatings on oil country tubular goods, and accordingly it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to provide a suitable coating on Hughes' components in order to protect the components from galling or corrosion.

Claims 13-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hughes (US 5,950,744) in view of Carstensen (US 4,706,997) as applied to claim 9 above, and further in view of Hughes (US 2005/0023831 A1).

Hughes '744/Carstensen fails to teach a plurality of openings in the first component and a plurality of openings in the second component, wherein the first plurality of openings and the second plurality of openings align to form one or more passages through the first component and the second component. Hughes '831 teaches a similar drill pipe joint that employs openings in a first component and a plurality of openings in the second component for wire or other material for transmitting power and data between the joined sections, wherein the first plurality of openings and the second plurality of openings align to form one or more passages through the first component and the second component. Refer to FIGS. 22-28 and [0071]-[0072]. Accordingly, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to modify Hughes '744/Carstensen with a plurality of openings in the first component and a plurality of openings in the second component for wire or other material, wherein the first plurality of openings and the second plurality of openings align to form one or more passages through the first component and the second component as taught by Hughes '831 in order to transmit power and data between the joined sections.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 8 and 26 are allowed.

Claim 27 would be allowable if amended to overcome the above-noted objection.

Claim 28 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph, set forth in this Office action and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to the claims have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to JAMES M. HEWITT whose telephone number is (571)272-7084. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F, 930am-600pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Daniel Stodola can be reached on 571-272-7087. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/James M Hewitt/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3679